

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A nestable bottle crate comprising:
 - a floor portion having a floor upper surface, the floor upper surface including a plurality of bottle support areas for supporting bottles;
 - a peripherally extending upper band portion having an inner surface with bottle contact portions;
 - a lower wall comprising adjacent columns which extend between the upper band portion and the floor portion, the columns having inner surfaces extending inwardly into the crate, wherein the bottle contact portions, bottle support areas, and the inner surfaces of the columns define a plurality of bottle receiving pockets extending around the periphery of the crate for maintaining bottles in a vertically upright manner; and
 - at least one ledge between the upper band portion and the lower wall, the at least one ledge protruding inwardly from the inner surface of the upper band portion between the bottle contact portions.
2. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein the inner surfaces of the columns are concave and each partially define a different one of the plurality of bottle receiving pockets.

3. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein the upper band portion comprises a plurality of first portions alternating with a plurality of second portions, wherein the first portions each comprise a single solid wall and wherein the second portions comprise an inner wall spaced inwardly from an outer wall.

4. The nestable bottle crate of claim 3 wherein the bottle contact portions are formed on inner surfaces of the plurality of first portions of the upper band portion.

5. The nestable bottle crate of claim 4 further including a lower lip projecting outwardly from an outer surface of each of the first portions of the upper band portion.

6. The nestable bottle crate of claim 5 wherein an outer surface of the upper band portion includes alternating recesses defined by the first portions of the upper band portion and the lower lip.

7. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein the lower wall further includes a plurality of corner columns in corners of the crate, a corner ledge protruding inwardly from the inner surface of the upper band portion between the upper band portion and the corner ledge.

8. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein the at least one ledge is at least substantially parallel to the floor upper surface.

9. The nestable bottle crate of claim 6 wherein the at least one ledge is at least substantially perpendicular to the inner surface of the upper band portion.

10. The nestable bottle crate of claim 7 wherein the lower wall further includes a plurality of corner columns in corners of the crate, a corner ledge protruding inwardly from the inner surface of the upper band portion between the upper band portion and the corner ledge, the corner ledge extending at least substantially parallel to the floor upper surface and at least substantially perpendicular to the inner surface of the upper band portion.

11. The nestable bottle crate of claim 8 wherein each corner column includes a concave inner surface partially defining one of the plurality of bottle receiving pockets.

12. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein the lower wall and the upper band portion form two pair of opposed walls, and wherein at at least one of the pair of opposed walls all points of the lower wall are disposed inwardly of an outer surface of the upper band portion.

13. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein each column comprises a single, solid column wall connecting the upper band portion to the floor, a inner surface of the column wall at least partially defining one of the plurality of bottle receiving pockets, and an outer surface of the column wall at least partially defining an outermost surface of the lower wall.

14. The nestable bottle crate of claim 1 wherein when a like crate is stacked thereon an upper surface of a floor portion of the like crate is below a plane defined by an upper surface of the at least one ledge of the crate.

15. A nestable bottle crate comprising:

a floor having a plurality of bottle support areas for supporting bottles;

a peripherally extending upper band portion having alternating first portions and second portions, the first portions each including a single, solid wall having a bottle contact surface;

a lower wall comprising spaced-apart columns which extend between the second portions of the upper band portion and the floor, the columns extending inwardly into the crate, wherein the bottle contact portions, bottle support areas, and the columns define a plurality of bottle receiving pockets extending around the periphery of the crate for maintaining bottles in a vertically upright manner; and

at least one ledge between at least one of the columns and the adjacent second portion of the upper band portion.

16. The nestable bottle crate of claim 15 wherein the at least one column is in a corner of the crate, such that the ledge is formed in the corner of the crate.

17. The nestable bottle crate of claim 15 wherein the columns include a pair of concave inner surfaces projecting inwardly into the crate, and wherein each concave inner surface partially defines one of the plurality of bottle receiving pockets.

18. The nestable bottle crate of claim 15 wherein the second portions of the upper band portion each comprise an inner wall spaced inwardly from an outer wall.

19. The nestable bottle crate of claim 15 wherein when a like crate is stacked thereon an upper surface of a floor of the like crate is below a plane generally parallel to the floor and containing an upper surface of the at least one ledge of the crate.

20. A nestable bottle crate comprising:
- a floor having a plurality of bottle support areas for supporting bottles;
 - a peripherally extending upper band portion having alternating first portions and second portions, the first portions having bottle contact surfaces;
 - a plurality of spaced-apart columns extending from the floor to the second portions of the upper band portion, each column projecting inwardly into the crate to form a ledge between the column and the second portion of the upper band portion, wherein the bottle contact portions, bottle support areas, and the columns define a plurality of bottle receiving pockets extending around the periphery of the crate for maintaining bottles in a vertically upright manner; and
 - four corner columns extending from the floor to the upper band portion, each corner column projecting inwardly into the crate to form a corner ledge between the corner column and the upper band portion.

21. The nestable bottle crate of claim 20 wherein the ledges and the corner ledges are generally parallel to the floor.

22. The nestable bottle crate of claim 21 wherein the ledges are generally perpendicular to the upper band portion.

23. The nestable bottle crate of claim 22 wherein the second portions of the upper band portion each comprise an inner wall spaced inwardly from an outer wall.

24. The nestable bottle crate of claim 23 wherein the first portions of the upper band portion each comprise a single, solid wall.

25. The nestable bottle crate of claim 24 further including a recess on an exterior of the wall of each of the plurality of first portions of the upper band portion.

26. The nestable bottle crate of claim 25 wherein when a like crate is stacked thereon an upper surface of a floor of the like crate is below a plane defined by upper surfaces of the corner ledges of the crate.

27. The nestable bottle crate of claim 20 wherein the second portions each include a nesting projection to provide a tighter fit with crates nested in the crate.

28. The nestable bottle crate of claim 27 wherein one of the nesting projections is smaller than at least one of the others of the nesting projections.